
AN
A P O L O G Y

For the RENEWAL of an

APPLICATION
TO
PARLIAMENT
BY THE
Protestant Dissenting Ministers.

ADDRESSED TO THE

THIRTEEN MINISTERS
WHO PROTESTED AGAINST IT.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

N. B. Some of the following Sheets were
printed off, while the Dissenters Bill was
depending in Parliament. This is men-
tioned, in order to account for the different
turns of expression, which will be found
in different parts of this Performance.

A N
A P O L O G Y

For the RENEWAL of an
A P P L I C A T I O N
T O
P A R L I A M E N T
B Y T H E
Protestant Dissenting Ministers.

ADDRESSED TO THE
T H I R T E E N M I N I S T E R S
W H O P R O T E S T E D A G A I N S T I T .

I N W H I C H
The EVIDENCE and FORCE of their Reasons are
fairly examined, and the Application is shewn
to be neither inconsistent with the Principles
of ORTHODOXY, or LOYALTY.

B Y S A M U E L W I L T O N .

For it was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it. D A V I D .

Bear ye one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.
P A U L .

L O N D O N :
Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noster Row;
J. ROBSON, in New Bond-Street; W. HARRIS, in
St. Paul's Church-Yard; and S. GARDNER, in
Gracechurch-Street.

M.DCC.LXXIII.

APOLGY

To the President

ABOLITION

PARLIAMENT

BY THE

Profranchise Association

Addressed to the

THIRTIETH MINISTERS

WHO FIGHTED AGAINST

THE

The English and French of the 18th century
and the English of the 19th century
to be neither consistent with the English
of the 18th century, nor the English
of the 19th century.

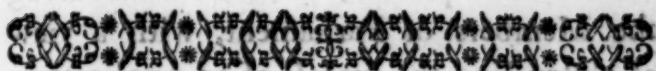
BY SAMUEL WILSON

Printed and Published by J. B. Davis,
at the "Museum," No. 1, Great Court Street, London, E.C. 4.



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1881.

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1026.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Publication was occasioned, by a printed Paper of Reasons, against the Renewal of an Application to Parliament by the Protestant Dissenting Ministers; to which Paper the following Names are subscribed.

DAVID MUIR	JOHN TROTTER
JOHN ROGERS	JOHN MACGOWAN
THOMAS TOWLE	GEORGE STEPHENS
SAMUEL BREWER	JOSEPH POPPLEWELL
EDWARD HITCHIN	HENRY HUNTER
THOMAS OSWALD	JOHN KELLO
JOHN POTTS	

It being always the sincere wish of the Author of this Reply, to live in Brotherly Love and Union with all the Ministers of the Gospel, he was extremely sorry for the sad occasion, of thus opposing the sentiments of any of his Brethren; and especially, of those with whom he has long been personally acquainted. But as those

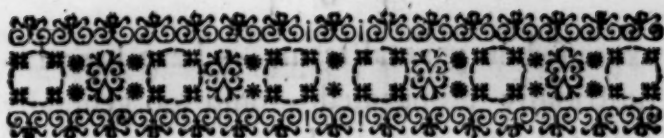
Reasons were printed, and distributed among the Members of Parliament, with a view of obstructing the success of an Application, in which, he thinks, not only his own personal security, and that of many of his Brethren are particularly interested ; but the cause of Truth and Religious Liberty in general equally concerned ; and that they had likewise a Tendency to prejudice the minds of Christians against the Petitioners ; on these accounts he could be no longer silent.

He has therefore with the greatest diffidence of himself, but in a firm reliance upon the goodness of his cause, ventured to submit this Reply, to the candid judgment of the impartial, and unprejudiced Publick.

Lower Tooting,
March the 18th,

1773.

A N



A N

APOLOGY, &c.

REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

CONSCIOUS to myself, that in concurring in the application to Parliament for the relief of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, Tutors, and School-masters, I was influenced by no other motives, than what are perfectly consistent with a most zealous attachment to the doctrines of Divine Revelation; I shall wave all apology, for thus publicly addressing you, in respect to the Reasons which you have alleged for opposing it. As they appear to me, to imply many charges against your petitioning Brethren, injurious to their character and reputation — as those charges are

expressed in general terms — have been industriously propagated — and too generally credited by those who are unacquainted with the true principles of the Application ; I esteem it a debt, which I owe to my Brethren, as well as to myself, to attempt a vindication of our conduct from all those reflections, which *ignorance*, or *malevolence*, may be apt to ground upon your printed Reasons.

It will be readily allowed by all who are acquainted with human nature, that it is sometimes extremely difficult, to suppress that eagerness and warmth, which are natural in defending our own characters, from the most unjust and injurious aspersions. For nothing which respects our civil and social connections, is dearer to a man of real integrity, than the preservation of a good name. And in proportion to his degree of sensibility, will be his resentment of defamation. Fully persuaded of this, it is my ambition, and shall be my endeavour, to keep the strictest guard, that I may not in any instance, express myself in language unbecoming the character I sustain ; or betray
the

the want of that temper, which is the fairest ornament of the disciples of Jesus—the temper of Him whom I call my LORD, and profess to make the great EXEMPLAR of my conduct.

It will be proper to transcribe the vote, of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, previously to an examination of the Reasons which you have assigned for your opposition to it. And this I the rather do, because I apprehend the Resolution itself, conveys in the very terms of it, the strongest evidence of its own reasonableness and propriety; especially when taken in connection with the heavy Penalties, to which all Non-subscribing Ministers, and Non-conforming Tutors, and School-masters, are now exposed (*a*).

At

(*a*) All Protestant Dissenting Ministers, who do not subscribe the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, as required by the Toleration-Act, are thereby excluded from the benefit of that Act, and exposed to the Penalties of all the Laws before in force against Non-conforming Ministers. They are “not to come or be, unless in passing upon the Road, within Five Miles of any City, or Town Corporate, or Borough

At a general Meeting of the Body of
 PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS,
 in and about *London*, held at the Library,
 in

“ that sends Burgesſes to Parliament ; or within Five
 “ Miles of any Pariſh, Town, or Place where they
 “ have taken upon them to preach ; upon Forfeiture,
 “ for every ſuch Offence, of the Sum of Forty Pounds;
 “ One Third to the King, another Third to the Poor
 “ of the Pariſh, and another to him that ſhall ſue for
 “ it ; and if ſuch Perſon keep a School, he ſhall forfeit
 “ likewise for every ſuch Offence, Forty Pounds ; and
 “ any two Juſtices of the Peace may, upon Oath made
 “ of any of theſe Offences, commit ſuch Offender for
 “ Six Months without Bail or Mainprize.” 17 Car. II.
 c. 2. And by another Act, upon Certificate of the
 Ordinary, to any two Juſtices of the Peace, of their
 having preached any Sermon or Lecture, the Juſtices
 are required to commit them, “ for Three Months, to
 “ the Common Jail, without Bail or Mainprize.” 13.
 & 14 Car. II. c. 4. §. 21. See 15 Car. II. c. 6. §. 7.
 And on Conviction, upon Oath of two Witneſſes, be-
 fore one or more Juſtices of the Peace, of having preach-
 ed, the Juſtices are required for the firſt Offence to
 levy a Penalty of “ Twenty Pounds ; and for every
 “ ſuch Offence afterwards a Penalty of Forty Pounds,
 “ a Third Part to go to the Informer or Informers.”
 22 Car. II. c. 1. §. 3. And every time they adminiſ-
 ter the Lord’s Supper, they are liable to a Penalty of
 One Hundred Pounds ; One Moiety to go to the King,
 another Moiety to be divided between the Poor of the
 Pariſh,

in *Red-Cross-Street*, on *Wednesday December 23, 1772*, it was voted, that “ An
 “ Application to Parliament, for the re-
 “ moval

Parish, and such Person or Persons as shall sue for the same by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint or Information in any Court of Record, wherein no Essoign, Protection, or Wager of Law shall be allowed, 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 4. §. 14.

“ Every Schoolmaster keeping any publick or private
 “ School, and instructing or teaching Youth in any
 “ House, or private Family, as a Tutor or School-
 “ master, is by Law obliged before the Archbishop,
 “ Bishop, or Ordinary of the Diocese, to subscribe a
 “ Declaration, that he will conform to the Liturgy of
 “ the Church of England, as by Law established,” on
 pain of forfeiting his School, and being utterly disabled,
 and ipso facto, deprived of the same — 13 & 14
 Car. II. c. 4. §. 8, 9, 10, 11. — And every Person
 instructing or teaching Youth in any private House, or
 Family, before License obtained from the Archbishop,
 Bishop, or Ordinary of the Diocese, and subscribing
 the above-mentioned Declaration, shall for the first
 Offence, suffer “ Three Months Imprisonment, without
 “ Bail ; and for every subsequent Offence, besides the
 “ like imprisonment for Three Months, shall forfeit
 “ Five Pounds to the King — And it is further en-
 “ acted, “ That it shall not be lawful for any Person,
 “ who shall not frequent Divine Service established by
 “ the Laws of this Kingdom, and carry him or herself
 “ reverently, decently, and orderly there, to teach any
 “ publick

“ moval of the *Subscription*, required of
 “ Protestant Dissenting Ministers, and the
 “ obtaining relief for Tutors and School-
 “ masters, be renewed, on the *Common*
 “ *Principle of Liberty*, should Friends ad-
 “ vise, and it be judged proper, by a Ma-
 “ jority of the Ministers of this Body.”

At a subsequent Meeting, held *January*
 the 27th 1773, one of your number in the
 name of the rest, was deputed to acquaint
 the Body, with the Reasons for your divid-
 ing against the above vote. And the first
 thing which claims my attention, is, the
 Note which you have inserted, relative to
 the conduct of the General Body upon that
 occasion; which I will transcribe *verba-*
tim.

N. B. “ *These Reasons were, after great*
 “ *Opposition from the Friends of the Ap-*
 “ *plication, at length permitted to be read*

“ publick or private School, or take any Boarders, or
 “ Tablers, that are taught or instructed by him or her-
 “ self, or any other; upon pain for every such Offence
 “ to forfeit the Sum of Forty Pounds.” 17 Car. II.
 c. 2. §. 4.

“ to the General Body, at their Meeting,
 “ on Wednesday, the 27th of January last,
 “ but met with such a disagreeable Recep-
 “ tion, that we find ourselves under an in-
 “ dispensable Necessity of submitting them to
 “ the impartial unprejudiced Publick.”

I am heartily sorry to say, that you have
 herein given a very unfair representation
 of the debate, which took place, previously
 to reading your Reasons against the appli-
 cation. As the Confirmation of the Mi-
 nutes of the preceding meeting, regularly
 came under consideration, before any other
 Business was entered upon; it was thought
 highly improper, and contrary to all rules
 of order, to pay any attention to your Rea-
 sons, before the Question respecting the
 Confirmation of those Minutes, had been
 put to the Vote. Your proposal therefore
 of making them the first object of atten-
 tion, was objected to in this view. But
 this by no means implied any objection to
 hearing them read, after that Question was
 determined — The debate which afterwards
 arose, was occasioned solely by the apprehen-
 sion that these Reasons were to be
 considered

considered, accepted, and entered on the Minutes, as a Protest against the Resolution. And that this was your real intention, was at that time explicitly acknowledged. But as Protests had never been admitted in this Body upon any occasion, it was objected against admitting one now, that it would introduce a Precedent likely to be attended with endless confusion. For if Reasons on the negative side of the Question were entered, it would be equally proper to enter those on the affirmative. But to hearing the Reasons read, and considering them as the speech of the dissentient Members, there was so far from being a *great* or *general* opposition, that the Friends of the Application were in general full as willing to hear them, as you were eager to have them read. As I apprehended, there might probably be a misrepresentation of that debate, I was particularly careful to observe, and to retain what passed upon that occasion. And I aver, that when the former question respecting Protests was dismissed, and that of merely *reading* your Reasons proposed; instead of a *great* opposition, there

was

was only *one single person* who objected. Your representation, is therefore calculated to make very unjust, and unfavourable impressions on the mind of the Reader; and to incapacitate the impartial and unprejudiced Publick, for forming a right judgment of this transaction. Nor did the debate afford any ground, for that charge of Partiality and Prejudice in the Friends of the Application; which you have so strongly insinuated, by contrasting them with the *impartial and unprejudiced Publick*.

Having thus prepossessed your Readers with prejudices against the Petitioners; you proceed to assign the Reasons for your Opposition; the EVIDENCE, and FORCE of which, will come now under examination.

I. “ Because the Resolution was formed
 “ with too great Haste and Rapidity: A
 “ Business of such peculiar Importance re-
 “ quiring the most mature Deliberation,
 “ and rendering more than one Meeting
 “ upon it necessary.”

How

How different are the apprehensions of different persons! To me it appeared astonishing, that a Resolution of such a nature should be the subject of Debate so long *. It was a Business of *such peculiar Importance*, and so nearly concerned the legal security of the Persons, and Property, of so many worthy and conscientious Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, that it was surprizing there could be the least hesitation about it. If the Resolution had been absolute and unconditional, even then such an hesitation would have appeared unreasonable, from the very nature and objects of the Application. — And still more unreasonable as the Resolution was made with a Proviso, that our Friends, (who from their situation were best capable of judging,) should advise us to proceed — And that the Body should approve another Application, after the opinion of our Friends had been reported. Was more than one Meeting necessary to carry the design into execution? More than one was intended. And that intention was expressed in the words of the Resolution itself. Besides,

* It was the subject of Deliberation some Hours.

the Question was not a new one. It was not brought in suddenly and unexpectedly. You well knew that notwithstanding the failure of success in the former Application, it had been agreed many Months before, to keep the Object still in view — that the Committee were appointed to collect the sense of our Brethren in the Country, that their concurrence might add weight to any future Application, which might be thought expedient. In this long interval, the Application had been the constant topick of discourse. The propriety of the Object in general stood upon the foot of a former Resolution — and I doubt not the opinion of almost every Individual had been formed long before he was summoned to this Meeting. That Opinion had by many been frequently declared: and not more frequently, or plainly, on the part of those who espoused, than of those who opposed the Application. And as for the only point which could now come to be considered, the propriety of applying at this particular time; it was expressly referred, as I have already observed, to future deliberation, after the
 opinion

opinion of our Friends should have been taken. So far was it from being hastily determined. I now proceed to consider the second Reason assigned for the Opposition.

II. " Because we apprehend the Terms
 " of the Resolution dark and indetermi-
 " nate: Of this we might give several
 " Instances, but are persuaded one will be
 " sufficient. The Ground of the renewed
 " Application is represented as " The Com-
 " mon Principle of Liberty;" a Mode of
 " Expression this, to which, as therein
 " used, we cannot affix any certain Idea.
 " " Liberty " is well known to be a Word
 " very differently understood and applied,
 " and " The Common Principle of Li-
 " berty " is of as various Meaning and Ap-
 " plication, as the Term " Liberty " itself.
 " We take this Opportunity of openly de-
 " claring, that We are utter Enemies to all
 " Kinds of Intolerance and Persecution,
 " and strenuous Assertors of rational Li-
 " berty, both Civil and Religious; but at
 " the same Time as openly declare, We
 " would ever be on our Guard, lest we be
 " betrayed

“ betrayed into any Evil, under that specious and lovely Name.”

Upon this Reason I would beg leave to remark, that it was the unanimous opinion of the Friends of the Application, that the phrase they adopted, and to which you object, could not possibly be misunderstood by any Protestant Dissenter. And (as has already been observed), “ it was adopted, “ with a declared Intention to set the Application on its true and proper Ground, “ and to preclude the Idea of its originating from a Predilection to any controverted Sentiments, which had been “ urged as a Difficulty with some in the way “ of their joining in the Application.” It is a little remarkable, that no objection was made to this Expression, at the Meeting when the Resolution was voted — not the least Intimation given at *that time*, that it was ambiguous, dark, or indeterminate — nor the most distant hint of a doubt, about its Signification, as therein used. It might perhaps be presumed, to be implied in this Restriction of your’s, that according to the *common use* of it, it is a clear and determi-

nate expression. It would be needless therefore to attempt any exposition of the Phrase in general; and indeed none but those who are totally unacquainted with the writings of the Dissenters, can be at a loss to conceive, in what sense it is commonly taken by Writers upon this subject. I should suppose that even those of the protesting Brethren, who are Advocates for that Church Authority, which militates against the claim of common Liberty; know what is meant by the Expression, how much soever they are inclined to dispute, or deny the right to which it refers. Nor do I think it possible, that any more clear and determinate phrase could have been substituted in its room. But perhaps your difficulty of determining its import, arises from an apprehension, that it is used in the Resolution, in a sense very different from that commonly received. Whereas the Supposition is groundless, and consequently the Conclusion erroneous. It was adopted as a common and well known Expression, without the most distant view or intention, of fixing any new sense upon it. However it is, I think, a Postulatum which you will not refuse to grant, that you

5

understood

understood your *own meaning*, when you frequently used the same Expression, by way of opposition, to what you said, was the real Ground of the Application. I want no further Concession. We understood it too, and adopted the words in the same sense in which you used them.

But You say, You “ are utter Enemies
 “ to all Kinds of Intolerance and Persecu-
 “ tion, and strenuous Assertors of rational
 “ Liberty, both Civil and Religious.” A truly Protestant declaration on the whole, only a little defective; since to “ strenuous
 “ Assertors,” you were unhappily restrained from adding, zealous promoters too; which I think would have been no inconsiderable amendment. Besides, there is somewhat *dark and indeterminate* in the phrase “ *ra-
 “ tional Liberty,*” (*b*) as *berein used*; which
 in

(*b*) If by “ *rational Liberty,*” be understood (as has been hinted,) that Liberty which is fit and proper for reasonable Creatures, you will allow me to say, that the Petitioners cannot give up their claim to be considered as reasonable Creatures, as well as their protesting Brethren; and think they have full as

in order to be consistent with the general scope of the Reasons, must be understood of something very different from the Liberty of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, without subscribing human explanatory Articles, as a qualification for the Christian Ministry — something different from an exemption of those from Fines and Imprisonment, who conscientiously refuse to subscribe. This, from the connection one would think, was in your Idea petitioning for an *irrational* Liberty. But let me seriously ask you, Is there any thing irrational or absurd, in seeking a legal protection from Fines and Imprisonment for the sake of a good conscience? Are we not herein acting in conformity to the first law of God, and of Nature; and under

much right to judge, what degree of Liberty is fit and proper for themselves, as any others have to determine for them. Every Man (whatever principles he holds,) will naturally judge, that the Liberty he desires to think and act for himself in matters of Religion, without the controul of penal Laws, while that Liberty no ways affects the safety of the State, or the rights of his Fellow-Subjects, is perfectly rational; consonant both to the voice of Reason, and the principles of sound Policy.

the

the regular influence of that principle of Self-preservation, which the Common Father of all Mankind, hath implanted in every Breast? Your apprehension of being betrayed into any evil under the specious and lovely name of Liberty, which follows, is more unaccountable still; since the legal security of your petitioning Brethren, is, I apprehend, the only evil, to which you can refer, and to which the Application most certainly tended. But how this could be considered in such a light, by utter Enemies to all Kinds of Intolerance and Persecution, is a mystery which I must leave to Yourself to explain.

In the mean time, I propose to pay a very particular attention to the next Reason, which is expressed in the following Words.

III. " Because We are of Opinion, that
 " as a Dislike to the Doctrinal Articles of
 " the Church of *England*, gave Rise to
 " the first Application to Parliament, the
 " same Dislike, in Part at least, excites to
 " the Application now intended. ... To this

“ Opinion We are led by the Words of
 “ the Resolution, and by what passed du-
 “ ring the Meeting at which it was formed.
 “ In the Resolution, the Application is re-
 “ presented, as to be “ renewed ;” an Ex-
 “ pression which conveys to our Minds the
 “ Idea, not of a totally different, but of
 “ the same Application repeated; and,
 “ during the Meeting, at which the Reso-
 “ lution was formed, the Committee,
 “ though repeatedly called upon, resolutely
 “ declined disavowing that Part of Mr.
 “ *Mauduit's* Pamphlet *, in which the
 “ Application to Parliament is expressly
 “ placed on a Doctrinal Foundation; a
 “ Pamphlet which the Committee have
 “ made their own, it being published at
 “ their Request, and circulated among our
 “ Brethren in the Country, with a Re-
 “ commendation, in a Letter wrote by the
 “ Chairman, in their Names ; the Name of
 “ each Committee-Man being added under
 “ the Chairman's, as an Intimation of his
 “ distinct Concurrence in the whole of the

* Vide the Case of the Dissenting Ministers by that Gentleman.

Letter.

“ Letter. Mr. Mauduit says, *The Tolera-*
 “ *tion Act suited our Fore-fathers, because*
 “ *they believed the Doctrines of the Articles,*
 “ *but does not suit the Dissenting Ministers*
 “ *of the present Day, because they do not*
 “ *believe them.* We are neither afraid nor
 “ ashamed to declare, that We believe the
 “ Doctrines of the Articles to be both true
 “ and important; We dare not therefore,
 “ consent to be held up to View, as those
 “ who indulge any Doubts, respecting
 “ their Truth, or at all hesitate about their
 “ Importance. We consider them as the
 “ Basis of our Hope; the Source of our
 “ Comfort, and the most powerful Incen-
 “ tive to a Course of sincere, stedfast,
 “ chearful Obedience. But, while We
 “ thus avow our great Regard for the Doc-
 “ trines held forth in the Articles of the
 “ Church of *England*, We as freely de-
 “ clare, that We do not receive them on
 “ the Authority of that Church; no, nor
 “ on the Authority of any Man, or Set of
 “ Men, however wise, pious, or respect-
 “ able; but solely because they are con-
 “ tained in the Word of God: The *only*
 “ Rule of Faith and Practice. We with

“ Satisfaction observe, these Doctrines
 “ avowed by the established Church of this
 “ Country; by the Church of *Scotland*;
 “ as well as by all the other Churches of
 “ the Reformation; and, with Pleasure,
 “ reflect on the steady adherence of our
 “ godly and learned Fore-fathers (whose
 “ Memory we highly value) to those
 “ sacred Truths; but still, We with equal
 “ Satisfaction and Pleasure, affirm; that,
 “ while in civil Matters, We are with
 “ Chearfulness, subject to the higher
 “ Powers; in Matters of Faith We call
 “ no Man Master on Earth; “ One is our
 “ Master, even CHRIST:” He being,
 “ “ GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER;”
 “ We desire always to regard him as the
 “ ONLY LORD OF CONSCIENCE,”

I begin with observing, that *supposing a*
Particular Dislike to any Doctrinal Articles
of the Church, had given rise to either the
 former, or present Application, it would
 not have been sufficient to justify an Oppo-
 sition, by Persons professing themselves
 utter Enemies to *all kinds* of Intolerance
 and Persecution. For if it be admitted,
that

that the belief of those Articles ought not to be the boundary of Toleration; then those who believe them, may warrantably unite in an Application for the relief of others, who are subjected to severe Penalties, for not subscribing what in their consciences they do not believe to be true. And that Toleration should be thus limited, has never yet been openly avowed by any of you. It is not indeed my design, to discuss the question respecting the just extent of Toleration, which has already been done to great advantage, by much abler hands. (c). But I profess myself an hearty Friend to universal and impartial Liberty of Conscience. I firmly believe, that the Safety of the State, is the only true Line of Toleration; and that every good Subject has an undoubted claim to it.

(c) I refer those who would see the Arguments in favour of the just idea and extent of Toleration, to the celebrated Letters of the great Mr. *Locke*, the late masterly Dissertation, intitled, "An Inquiry, &c." written by the ingenious Mr. *Fownes* of *Shrewsbury*, and an Essay upon the same subject by Dr. *Furieux*, in which the most clear and solid Arguments, are most persuasively applied to the *Feelings of the Heart*.

The

The consideration proper for you, if you apprehended that the Application sprung from such a Dislike, was not, whether some Persons, might not have views in it, which you did not approve ; but whether there did not exist some Reason for it common to us all ? Now, if the Laws in force against the Non-Subscribers were cruel and inhuman ; the dictate of Humanity would surely be, Let us heartily join in petitioning that our Fellow-Creatures, (if you scrupled to account us your Fellow-Christians,) may be freed from such unreasonable Penalties, for following the dictates of their Consciences. And before you had engaged in an open Opposition to such a design, another Question was previously necessary. Will any injury arise to ourselves from its success ? (*d*)

I add,

(*d*) What Mr. *Harris* (a Gentleman well known in the learned World,) observed, in reference to those who petitioned against the Bill, will equally apply to those who protested against it. For a Protest printed, and distributed among the Members of Parliament, was to all intents and purposes, the same with petitioning against it. The following were some of his Remarks.

“ I have

I add, that both the Nature, and the Honour of our Religion claimed your concurrence in this Application. For Christ's Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom ; " the weapons of our" ministerial " War-

" I have no Objection to receiving Petitions. I am
 " a Friend to Petitions. But they always have been,
 " and always should be under some restrictions. Every
 " Petition ought to have, either the one, or the other
 " of these Objects ; the obtaining of some Good, or
 " the avoiding of some Evil. But the present Petition
 " can have neither. The Petitioners acknowledge
 " they are tolerated now, and they will be equally to-
 " lerated if this Bill should pass into a Law. The
 " most they can say against it, is, that it will do them
 " no positive good. But if it will do good to others,
 " and do them no harm ; what is the language of this
 " Petition, but saying, the Misery of others is our
 " Happiness, and the Happiness of others will be our
 " Misery. I will put a Case. Suppose the Inhabi-
 " tants of *Salisbury* should bring in a Bill, to make a
 " Turnpike Road between *Salisbury*, and *Amesbury*
 " (two Towns in *Wilt*s). If the Inhabitants of *Ames-*
 " *bury* should petition against that Bill, upon account
 " of any inconveniences, they might apprehend, would
 " arise to them from passing it ; we ought in justice to
 " receive, and hear their Petition. But what should
 " we think, if the Inhabitants of *Berwick* upon *Tweed*,
 " should petition against making such a Road, *because*
 " *they* do not want a Road between *Salisbury* and
 " *Amesbury* ?"

" fare

“ fare are not carnal, but mighty through
 “ God to the pulling down of strong
 “ Holds.” The Gospel of Christ at its
 first promulgation, made its way in oppo-
 sition to the united power and policy of
 Earth and Hell; nor do the Truths of
 that Divine Revelation, stand in need of the
 feeble succours of an arm of Flesh. Fines
 and Imprisonments are therefore, neither
 the proper nor appointed means, either of
 propagating, or defending the Religion of
 Christ; but have a direct tendency to dis-
 grace it, and raise prejudices against it.
 The sword of the Magistrate, may be a fit
 instrument of supporting the claims of a
 false Prophet — of establishing the Impos-
 ture of a MOHAMMED. But JESUS of *Na-*
zareth rests his high pretensions upon the
 evidence of Miracles — upon the fulfilment
 of Prophecies — He procured the communi-
 cation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to pre-
 pare the way, for the reception of his Re-
 ligion into the hearts of Men. Surely then
 the credibility of our holy Religion, must
 have received some tremendous shock, if in
 these latter days it should stand in need of
 assistance from that temporal Power, over
 which

which it formerly obtained such illustrious conquests. But are the infirmities of old age incident to a Divine Revelation? No. The Truths of the Gospel have still the same immoveable Foundation, the same external Evidence, the same intrinsic Excellence, and the same almighty Guardian which they ever had. They can never be in the least endangered, by the most violent attacks of the enemies of Revelation; since our Faith is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself (the Only Begotten of the Father,) being the chief Corner-Stone. And so far is it from sustaining any injury from the freest and fullest Examination, that its evidence, will on the contrary, arise with superior glory, in consequence of the severest scrutiny, or even the most malignant Opposition. It is disgracing then the divine Authority and Evidence of that holy Religion, to set a fence of penal Laws about any of its Doctrines. And when once it is set, every man who is jealous for the honour of his Redeemer, and the credit of his Religion, should lend a willing hand to pluck it up. For otherwise, he may seem

to betray some consciousness of weakness in his cause, and to build his Faith upon the Authority of Men, rather than of God. As Christians, and as Protestants, we ought to glory in deriving our Faith *ex ipsis fontibus*, from the Scriptures themselves, and them alone. We ought to glory too in the sufficiency of those Scriptures, for maintaining and defending the Faith. If there is an article in our Creeds, which cannot be supported by the testimony of Scripture, let us expunge it with an honest indignation — not seek to sanctify, or protect it, under the shelter of any established Symbols. If we believe our principles to be entirely agreeable to the word of God, the best evidence we can give of that persuasion, is to consent that they shall stand or fall by that unerring standard; and generously to scorn the use of any other weapons in their defence. What an Energy and Pathos was there in the words of a most respectable Gentleman, a distinguished Advocate for our cause; * words equally consonant to the dignity of the Senator,

* Sir George Savile.

and the principles of the Christian. “ Merciful Jesus ! Is it in the nature of *thy* Religion, to be supported by the continuance of penal Laws, which it is not in the heart of Man to execute ! ” But is there not, at least, the appearance of seeking such a support, if we contend, that all who do not entertain the same views with ourselves of the Doctrines of Christianity, should be continued liable to the penalties inflicted by the Statutes against Non-Conformity. (e)

But let us see in what manner your representation of the Rise and Ground of the Application, is supported. It is your *Opinion*. The Opinion of thirteen Gentlemen, who would not credit the repeated declarations of a great majority of their Brethren, but rather chose to adhere to this plausible and popular pretext, to cover a

(e) The Reader may see these Arguments handled more at large, and with great force of reasoning, in Dr. *Furneaux's* Letters to the Hon. Mr. Justice *Blackstone*, Letters II. and III. in the first Section of his Essay on Toleration, and in Dr. *Stennett's* Free and Dispassionate account of the late Application, to which I with great pleasure refer him.

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determined opposition to an enlargement of the Toleration Act — an Opinion, taken up in opposition to the most plain and express assurances, that though we differed in our judgments about the Articles themselves, we were all agreed in sentiment, that making a *Subscription* to them, the *condition* and *boundary* of Toleration, was a gross invasion of the rights of Conscience, an usurpation of the Authority of Christ, and an unreasonable hardship upon Protestant Dissenters; and that, upon this principle, we all united in an application for Redress. It is beyond the stretch of my comprehension, how you really could entertain this Opinion, when you knew that great numbers most heartily engaged in the Application, were as firmly attached to those Doctrinal Articles, as yourselves. You knew it from personal acquaintance. You knew it from their Preaching, or ministerial Connections. You knew it of many, by their Writings. Is it not then in an high degree uncandid and disingenuous, to lay hold upon one Reason, which influenced only some Individuals, and influenced them but in part; and at the same time, purposely to overlook
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the grand principle common to us all? Have you forgotten the meek, affectionate, pathetic language of the worthy Chairman of the Committee, when in making his Reports, he again and again assured you, that it was not as *Arians*, or *Athanasians*, as *Calvinists*, or *Arminians*; but as *Protestants*, and *Protestant Dissenters*, that we had engaged in this Application? Have you forgotten, that many of its warmest Friends asserted upon those occasions, in the strongest terms, that they would not, and could not have united in it, upon the principle of opposition to those Doctrines of the Articles? It never was denied, that several of them disapproved of some of the Articles, but to infer from hence, that this was the common ground of the Application, is, surely, not to regulate a conclusion by the premises. It is natural to expect, that in a cause wherein a great number of persons are concerned, some may have more motives than others, for engaging in it — that there should be some Reasons common to all, and others peculiar to Individuals. This was precisely the case in our Application. But the advantage you have taken of

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this circumstance (to use the softest terms,) is illiberal and unkind.

How you could be led to this Opinion by the words of the Resolution, so directly calculated to overthrow that Opinion, is to me quite incomprehensible. Or how it should be supported by what passed during the Meeting at which it was formed, I know not. The most that I can conjecture, is, that some Individual might acknowledge, that a disbelief of some of the Articles, was a Reason for his joining in the Application; and we have all along allowed that it was a most powerful corroborating Reason with many; but this (as has been before observed,) falls far short of proving, that it was the only Reason with such, or the *common ground* on which we proceeded. I recollect nothing of this sort. And if any thing of this sort had been dropped, I am sure it would not have escaped my observation, nor do I believe it would have slipped my memory. Surely there is a wide difference, between allowing a particular sentiment, to be a partial motive with Individuals, for wishing success

to the Application; and laying it down as the common basis of that Application. The former we admit, the latter we utterly disclaim. And such a partial influence of dislike to the Articles, as has been above admitted, could not with any propriety be urged as an objection to the Application, by any who wish to be considered as enemies to Intolerance and Persecution.

But a "renewed Application," conveys the Idea not of a *totally* different, but of the same Application repeated. What amazing powers of Criticism are here displayed! If the same Persons apply a second time, for the same Thing, and to the same Power, it would doubtless, in some sense, be a *renewed* Application, whatever alteration there might be made in stating the grounds of that Application. And in the present case, it would have been strange beyond all comparison, if our second Application had been *totally* different from the first. The best way of evidencing this, would have been to have applied to the Legislature, to require us to subscribe something more; or at least, more rigorously to exact the

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Subscrip-

Subscription now required. But indeed, Gentlemen, a *renewed* Application might be *totally the same* with the former, without at all countenancing your Opinion of the grounds of it. For we set out in the first attempt on the Common Principle of Liberty, notwithstanding those words were not inserted in the Resolution. And though your Unbelief, led us to insert those words in the vote for the second Application, to prevent that matter being called in question any more; we did not mean thereby to declare, that we went upon different Principles before.

In answer to this, you will alledge the evidence of Mr. *Mauduit's* Pamphlet, with this additional attestation, that it was circulated by the Committee, with a Letter to which the name of each Committeeman was affixed. Upon this you have put your own Sense, and (as is often the case with Commentators,) have taken too great a latitude of Interpretation, and thereby grossly perverted the Text.

The sole Object of this Pamphlet, was to represent to the Legislature, the *reasonableness* and

and *propriety* of our Application. And as it contained a great many very sensible, and pertinent observations; and the general reasoning of it was particularly adapted to influence the minds of the Persons, to whom it was addressed; it was judged by the Committee, to be well calculated to forward the success of the Bill.

The main purport of the reasoning contained in it, was to demonstrate, that the Toleration-Act does not now answer the original intention of the Legislature in granting it; as it does not operate so far in favour of the Dissenters of the present Age, as it did in favour of those of the last Century. In proof of this, it is alledged, that many more disapprove of some of the Doctrines, contained in the Articles of the Church, than did at the time, when that Act was passed; besides the general revolution in the Sentiments of the Dissenters, respecting the Magistrate's right, of demanding Subscription to any human Formularies, as a condition of Toleration. Now surely, it was a striking representation of the fitness and reasonableness of the Ap-

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plication,

plication, that in a Period, when the true principles of Toleration were better understood, and it's just extent and conditions more generally approved, the only Act of Toleration in existence, should not only on that very account, but from other causes, become daily more and more limited in its operation; and fewer Persons than ever, be able conscientiously to take the benefit of it. Such was the general drift of that Gentleman's reasoning, who as a generous Friend to the interests of religious Liberty, stood forth to plead this cause. And though in the course of his reasoning, Mr. *Mauduit* (as is natural to every Writer,) blended his own particular sentiments on some doctrinal Points, and expressed himself in language agreeable to those sentiments; it was by no means the design of the Committee, as such, to adopt all his private opinions respecting controverted points. And much less can the recommendation of the Committee, grounded upon the general reasoning of the Pamphlet, be construed as expressive of an approbation given by all the Friends of the Application, to every sentiment contained in it; since none but the

Committee

Committee knew of the publication, and they bear no sort of proportion to the number of Ministers engaged in seeking relief from the penal Laws. It is further worthy of observation, that the Resolution of the Body was formed, and the principles on which that Resolution was grounded, had been explained, long before this Pamphlet was written — that you knew long before your Reasons were drawn up, that those particular Sentiments, were far from being agreeable to great numbers concerned — that the Committee had fully explained themselves upon this head, and that no such approbation was intended by them, as you would insinuate; for they repeatedly disavowed a recommendation of it *in the view* you alledge — and that in the Resolution for the second Application, this objection was designedly and expressly obviated, by grounding it upon the *Common Principle of Liberty*. If such therefore had been your opinion of Mr. *Mauduit's* Pamphlet, you ought in justice, as well as charity to your Brethren, to have concluded that it was a mistaken representation. He had himself desired, that, “ if any thing contained in it

“ should be judged improper, the blame
 “ might fall upon himself only, and not
 “ be imputed to the prejudice of a cause,
 “ which he wished to serve.” * And after
 all, since it did contain a just representation
 of the Sentiments of many of the Peti-
 tioners; if notwithstanding those Senti-
 ments, they were intitled to Toleration, I
 should have thought, none but Enemies to
 a Toleration, could have objected to their
 Case being stated, as a proper object of the
 regard of the Legislature. For it must be
 remembered, that Mr. *Mauduit* does not
 express himself in those *universal* terms
 which you have adopted. The Sentiment
 you have introduced as his, (in the judg-
 ment of all candid Readers,) carries with
 it, as it stands in your Reasons, the air of
 a direct quotation; and so is calculated to
 impose upon the Reader. For Mr. *Mau-*
duit limits his assertion, by saying, that
 “ many of the Dissenters now find their
 “ Opinions altered in some of those Arti-
 “ cles.” † And I know for a certainty,

* See the Advertisement prefixed to the first Impres-
 sion.

† See the first Edition, p. 4.

that he did not mean to intimate that none of the Dissenters united in the Application, believed those Doctrines of the Articles ; or that a disbelief of them, was the common ground of it. He is too well acquainted with the state of the Dissenting Interest, not to know the contrary. Let me add, that in the close of this very Pamphlet, he has stated in the strongest terms, as the Basis of the Application, “ the uniform “ and avowed Principle of the Dissenters, “ that the Holy Scriptures are the only and “ sufficient Rule of Faith and Practice ; “ and that therefore they can submit to “ the Authority of no human Decisions, as “ a supplemental Amendment to them.” * But at the same time, from an apprehension, that the Majority of Dissenting Ministers disapproved of some of the Articles, he was led to express himself in *general* terms. This I verily believe to be an unquestionable Fact ; since many who are thoroughly *Calvinistical*, cannot conscientiously subscribe all the Articles, to which a Subscription is now required by the Tole-

* See the first Edition, p. 34 & seq.

ration Act. How well such objections are founded, will be hereafter distinctly examined. But indeed, Gentlemen, when these things are duly considered, both Mr. *Mauduit*, and the Friends of the Application, have reason to complain that you have done them great injustice.

I am sure you cannot go further than myself, in an esteem and veneration for the Memory of our pious *Fore-Fathers*, who maintained the Doctrines of the Articles. Their Sentiments, I think scriptural, their Characters I revere, with what the World may possibly call, a degree of Puritanical Enthusiasm; and their Writings I highly prize, as the most valuable remains of evangelical Piety, and Devotion. Notwithstanding which, I cannot conceive, why the different sentiments of any Individuals, should be urged as an Objection against an Application, grounded upon the *Common Principle of Liberty*.

It should be further remarked, that by submitting only to a Declaration of Faith in the Holy Scriptures, it fully appeared,
that

that we approved of no Subscription to any human explanatory Articles whatsoever, even though perfectly agreeable to our own Sentiments, or so generally expressed, as to remove the Objections any of us might have to the present Set of Articles. Whereas, according to your representation of the motive of our conduct, we surely should have been contented, either with desiring to subscribe the present Articles, under certain restrictions and qualifications; or have framed and offered some others to be substituted in their room. But we were unanimously against the *Subscription* and *Imposition* of any, as equally injurious to religious Liberty, and totally inconsistent with the Allegiance we owe to CHRIST the only LORD of Conscience, and our only MASTER, and LAW-GIVER in matters of Religion.

I have hitherto considered you, as by Doctrinal Articles of the Church, intending those, which are commonly reputed to be the distinguishing points of Orthodoxy; but you will pardon me for suggesting, that to represent a dislike to the Doctrinal Articles as the ground of the Application, without

without specifying any Particulars, is to brand your Brethren with Herefy, in very “dark and indeterminate terms.” Some of those Doctrinal Articles to which we are required to subscribe, are levelled against *Atheists*, others against *Deists*; some against *Papists*, others against *Arians* and *Socinians*; some against *Arminians*; and others, if I mistake not, are particularly pointed against some of the distinguishing Tenets of *Protestant Dissenters*. But which, out of this catalogue of hard and opprobrious Names, do you intend to fix upon your Brethren? For any thing that appears in your Reasons to the contrary, the Reader is left at liberty to take his Choice, and adopt such as he may think, the most obnoxious of them all.

Allow me, Gentlemen, also to remind you, that *all* the Articles to which our Subscription is required, have been commonly, (though perhaps not with strict propriety,) called Doctrinal Articles; since those which more particularly respect the Constitution and Discipline of the Church of *England*, are excepted by the Act of Toleration.

The Phrase was used in this *sense* and to this *extent*, in the Case of the Dissenters. Hence it will appear, that there is no inconsistency between an attachment, to what are sometimes called the *Doctrines of the Reformation*, and having some material objections to the matter of some of the Articles — such as contain Sentiments and Positions, to which, I think, your Encomium passed upon the Doctrines of the Articles, will by no means apply. But you make no Distinctions or Exceptions whatsoever, either in the declaration of your Faith in the Doctrines of the Articles, or in the commendation you bestow upon those Articles. You take them all together, and are “neither
 “afraid nor ashamed to declare, that you
 “believe them to be both true and important. You dare not therefore consent, to
 “be held up to view, as those who indulge
 “any doubts respecting their Truth, or at
 “all hesitate about their Importance. You
 “consider them,” (without exception of any,) “as the Basis of your Hope, the
 “Source of your Comfort, and the
 “most powerful Incentive to a Course of
 “sincere, stedfast, chearful Obedience.”
 Nevertheless.

Nevertheless there are some, concerning which, though you have no occasion to be afraid; yet I think any Protestant Dissenter might very innocently be *ashamed*, to make such a Declaration. Nor should it be forgotten, that an insuperable objection to a *single Clause* in *any one* of the Articles, as effectually deprives a conscientious Man of the benefit of Toleration, as if he disbelieved every Doctrine contained in the whole Thirty-nine.

Since the Application was resolved on, I have indeed frequently wished, there had been nothing in any of the Articles, to which I was constrained by conscience to object; that all possibility of suspicion might be removed, that my concurrence in it was grounded, upon a dislike to the Doctrines of the Reformation. For in that case, I should have abated nothing of the Zeal and Ardor, with which I have engaged in this cause of Liberty and Conscience. I am fully persuaded, that the greatest degree of excellence, the nearest approach, in any human Creeds, to perfection, is yet an insufficient plea for imposing them under the sanction

sanction of human penalties, upon the consciences of Men. For let these Articles be ever so excellent, when thus imposed, they are Fetters still — and it is not Fetters of Silver, or Chains of Gold, that can reconcile a free born Soul, conscious of its Birth-right, to submit to an abject state of slavery, and renounce its native claim to Freedom. Upon this broad bottom, I hope I shall ever stand; as most cordially adopting the Language of the great *Chillingworth*, “The Bible, the Bible, the Bible, I say the Bible only, is the Religion of Protestants.” But though I disapprove of Subscription to any human Articles, however unexceptionable in themselves, when imposed as a Test of qualification for the Christian Ministry; and when such Subscription is made the boundary of Toleration; yet I cannot, I dare not say, I have in the present case, no objection to the Articles themselves, I have many — objections perfectly consistent with the principles of a *Calvinist* — and such that I wonder how any Protestant Dissenter, whether he be a *Calvinist*, or an *Arminian*, can with a good conscience subscribe them. Thus it is true with regard to myself,

self, and I am persuaded, many more than you seem to imagine, that a dislike to some Particulars in the Articles required to be subscribed, was an additional motive for joining in the Application, and wishing it success.

And here I would beg leave to remark, that the popular clamour which you have endeavoured to excite against your Brethren, is grounded solely upon the contrary Supposition; viz, that no Man who is in your judgment, and mine, evangelical in his principles, can have any objection to the Articles. And I have found as to many persons, that when this matter has been fairly stated to them, it has at once extirpated the prejudices, which the invectives of our Opponents, had established in their minds. The following observations will, I think, elucidate the Reason of the general credit, which has been given to that Supposition.

The Bulk of the Laity of the Church of *England*, are very little conversant in the Articles; but look upon them, as having some kind of magical operation upon the security of the Church. Such as attend
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the ministry of those, whom it has pleased God to raise up in the Church, to preach some of the most important of her Doctrines, (and to whom I most cordially wish abundant success,) are indeed accustomed more frequently to hear their Articles quoted, and appealed to. But even with respect to them, it is to be observed, that their attention is solely drawn to such of the Articles, as respect some particular Doctrines. And as they are frequently reminded in general terms, of the importance of the Articles; whenever they hear of any dislike to, or scruples concerning them, they immediately suspect them to be grounded upon a disaffection to those particular Tenets; and seem to be as ignorant as any others, of all the Articles which have no reference to those Doctrinal Points.

And I apprehend, that even with respect to the generality of Dissenting Ministers who have qualified according to Law, it may be fairly presumed, that their Subscription has been the result of a general apprehension that the Articles are *Orthodox*, and in the main agreeable to their own

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Sentiments,

Sentiments, without a very minute examination into the meaning of them all. They have generally subscribed soon after their entrance into the Ministry, when they indulged the less hesitation, because others who were found in the Faith, had subscribed before them,

But in order more fully to convince you, that I do not mean to rest in general Assertions, I propose hereafter to consider distinctly, and at large, some of the Articles to which our Subscription is required; and believe I shall point out some solid objections which lie in the way of subscribing them. And if I do this, you will surely allow, a Man may have a claim to Orthodoxy, though he may indulge some doubts respecting their Truth, and more than hesitate about their Importance.

Your Intimation is however not true, that all those Doctrines to which our Subscription is required, are avowed by the Church of *Scotland*, and by all the other Churches of the Reformation; nor were they steadily adhered to by all of our godly and learned

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Fore-fathers, by whatever means they were reconciled to a Subscription to them. We ought to remember, that they delivered in an explanation of the sense, in which they subscribed some of the Articles, from which we may fairly infer, that they had some difficulties about subscribing every thing contained in them, in its obvious and literal sense.

Besides, as to the *avowal* of the most important Doctrines of the Articles by many other Churches, I heartily rejoice in it; and not one of us has any objection to it, provided they do not *impose* any Doctrines upon others, under the sanction of human penalties. Unless they so *impose* them, their *avowal* of them, cannot be considered as a justification of your Opposition — of an Opposition to an Application to Parliament, for relief from the obligation to *subscribe* the Articles of the Church of *England, upon pain of incurring the heavy Penalties against Nonconformity* — not to a Prayer that the Legislature would proscribe the *belief* of those Articles. To the latter, such as have no objections to the Articles themselves,

selves, could with no propriety consent; but a concurrence in the former, is perfectly consistent with the most thorough belief of them (*f*). These are the Ideas, which, though

(*f*) It is with peculiar satisfaction, that I can produce so unexceptionable an Evidence, as the Reverend Mr. *Toplady*, in favour of my Assertion. It is impossible that either the Orthodoxy of that Gentleman, or his Zeal for the Articles of the Church can be called in question, after the many proofs his Writings afford, that he is to be numbered among the most ingenious, and learned Champions for the Doctrines of the Church of *England*. And yet notwithstanding his firm Belief, both of the Truth, and Importance of the Articles, and his zealous opposition to the Petitioning Clergy; he has said some of the strongest things, on the reasonableness and propriety of an Enlargement of the Toleration.

“ The Toleration of Protestants (says he,) should,
 “ by every Law both of God, of Nature, and of Civil
 “ Policy, be *absolutely unlimited*. 'Tis as much their Due,
 “ as the Air they breathe, or as the Light by which
 “ they see. They are not to *ask* it, as a Favor; but
 “ may *claim* it, as a Debt.” — “ It is injurious to the
 “ right of private Judgment, to exact Subscription, to
 “ the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England*,
 “ from those very Persons, who declare themselves *Dif-*
 “ *senters* from that Church.” — “ A Toleration, truly
 “ Protestant, requires a more generous and expanded
 “ Basis.” — “ As far as the *Protestant Dissenters* are
 “ concerned, I should, as a Well-wisher to Mankind,
 “ rejoice

though so justly distinguishable, you have all along confounded, in your third Reason against the Application.

When

“ rejoice to see *Subscription*, I will not say, *relaxed*, but “ intirely taken out of the way.” — “ Surely, bare *Con-* “ *nivance* is too slender a security for the Property and “ Freedom of any Protestant whatever !” See his Free Thoughts on the projected Application, &c. P. 28 & seq.

And upon another occasion, he seems to apprehend more Inconveniencies, likely to arise from imposing Subscriptions to human Forms, even in *Establisments*, than one would imagine any Person could, who has pleaded so warmly, against any relaxation of that Requisition in the Church of *England*. In his account of the Life of JEROM ZANCHIUS, (prefixed to his Translation of that Writer’s Discourse on the Doctrine of Predestination,) speaking of the Difficulties which *Zanchius* had in subscribing the *Augsburg* Confession, to which he was compelled in order to retain his Professorship at *Strasburg* ; and to which he submitted with this declared Restriction, *modo orthodoxè intelligatur* ; he adds the following pertinent Question, and Remark. “ I shall, here, beg leave to interpose one question, “ naturally arising from the subject. What good purpose do the imposition and the multiplication of unnecessary *Subscriptions* to forms of human composition, tend to promote ? Tis a fence, far too low, “ to keep out men of little or no principle ; and too “ high, sometimes, for men of real integrity to surmount,

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When however you urge the avowal of Doctrines by those Churches as an *Authority* in favour of the unjust claims to which we object ; I must observe, that if there had been as many more such Authorities, they would have had no weight with me, in opposition to the plainest dictates of Reason, and the clearest precepts of Christianity. But I really think, you have not said all that might be said upon this point, in favour of your Cause. I wonder your sagacity and penetration, did not furnish you with some additions to your List of Authorities. You should at least have inserted one more, the Head and Leader of all the rest ; the Ancient, Catholic, Apostolic, Infallible Church of *Rome* (g).

Indeed

“ mount. It, often, opens a door of ready admission,
 “ to the *abandoned* ; who, Ostrich like, care not what
 “ they swallow, so they can but make Subscription a
 “ bridge to secular interest : and, for the *truly honest*,
 “ it, frequently, either quite excludes them from a
 “ sphere of action, wherein they might be eminently
 “ useful ; or obliges them to testify their assent, in such
 “ terms, and with such open, profest restrictions, as
 “ render subscription a mere nothing.”

(g) The following curious Decree of the Council of *Trent*, may justly be considered as the Parent of all such Impositions.

“ Moreover

Indeed there is a greater degree of consistency in the conduct of the Church of Rome, than in the similar conduct of any Protestant

“ Moreover for the restraining of petulant and saucy
 “ Wits, the Council does Decree, that no Man presume upon his own Prudence, in matters of Faith
 “ and Manners, such as appertain to Edification;
 “ wresting the Holy Scriptures to speak his own sense,
 “ against that which our Holy Mother the Church,
 “ has, and does hold, to whom it of right belongs, to
 “ judge of the true Sense and Interpretation of the
 “ Holy Scriptures; or against the unanimous Consent
 “ of the Fathers, daring to put his own Interpretation
 “ upon Holy Writ, even although those their Interpretations should never be made publick. The Ministers of their respective Cures shall declare it, if
 “ they know any that contradict this our Order, that
 “ they may undergo the Punishment according to Law,
 “ in that case provided.”

And again, after giving some Directions about the Examination, and License of the printed Copies of the Bible, and Annotations upon it, it is thus further Decreed.

“ After all this, willing to amend that too much
 “ Boldness of some, who turn every thing to profane
 “ Uses, and make the Words speak *their own Sense*,
 “ turning the Holy Scriptures forsooth into Scurrilities,
 “ Fables, Vanities, Flatteries, Detractions, Superstitions, Wicked and Diabolical Incantations, Divinations, Sorceries, and Infamous Libels, it does
 D 4 “ command

Protestant Church. The Church of *Rome* openly avows her pretensions to Infallibility, and upon this claim, grounds her exercise of Dominion over the consciences of Men. But every Protestant Establishment disavows such a Claim. Yet surely there is a degree of Arrogance, not very remote from it, in all those who would make their own Sentiments, in the Punctilios of Theological Controversy, the Standard of Truth, and the Line of Toleration. Nay, when we renounce this claim, it is yet more arrogant to bind the consciences of others by our Determinations, confessing ourselves at

“ command and appoint, for the removing all Irreverence and Contempt of this nature, that none for the future dare any ways pervert the Sacred Text, to those, or the like Ends; that all such Men, rash Interpreters and Violators of the Word of God, his Power, and good Pleasure, shall be punished at the Discretion of their Bishops.”

The Decree from which I have made the above Extract, was made in the fourth Session or Setting (celebrated the 8th day of *April* 1546,) of the Thrice Holy, Oecumenick, and General Council of *Trent*, begun under PAUL III. Bishop of *Rome*, on the 13th Day of the Month *December*, and in the Year of our LORD 1545. It is intitled, “ A Decree about the Edition and Use of the Sacred Text.”

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the same time to be equally fallible with them. *Humanum est errare*. If this is a proper Motto for Mankind at large, (without excepting either any Individuals, or any Bodies of Men,) we ought chearfully to unite, in every attempt to free the consciences of Christians, from a servile subjection, in matters of Religion, to the Judgment and Authority of fallible Men.

But the Usurpation of that Authority which belongs to Christ, and to him alone, is equally the Object of my detestation, whether exercised by Popes, by Prelates, by Presbyters; in the Conclave at *Rome*, in a general Council, in an House of Convocation, or in a general Assembly; or when more unnaturally transferred to the Civil Magistrate.

The Principles concerning the sole Authority of Christ, advanced in the remaining sentences of the third Reason, are truly excellent in themselves; but are at the same time powerful motives to apply for relief, from Subscription to Creeds of human composition, enforced by penal sanctions; and
therefore,

therefore, in my opinion, most strangely misapplied, in support of an opposition to the cause in which we are engaged.

We now proceed to the fourth Reason.

IV. “ Because it appears to us, that, as
 “ the Application now proposed is, in some
 “ Respects, different from that to which
 “ the Concurrence of many of our Brethren
 “ in the Country has been solicited, their
 “ Opinion should be again taken ; that *all*
 “ the Country Ministers should be consulted,
 “ before a second Application to Parliament
 “ be determined ; and that, as the
 “ Dissenting Laity, a numerous and respectable
 “ Body ! who are materially concerned in the
 “ State of the Toleration Act, have not been
 “ universally, nor even generally advised with ;
 “ they, with whom the Ministers are essentially
 “ connected, should have an Opportunity of
 “ declaring their Sentiments, before any Steps
 “ of Moment are taken, in an Affair of so great
 “ Importance. We have been told indeed,
 “ that these Gentlemen, *the Deputies*, have
 “ been consulted, and approved the late
 “ Application ;

“ Application ; but while We view that
 “ Body with all due Respect, We must
 “ avow it as our Opinion, that they are not
 “ to be considered as the Representatives of
 “ all the Dissenters throughout the King-
 “ dom ; no, not even of all the *London*
 “ Dissenters themselves ; and indeed, if
 “ they were the Representatives of the
 “ Whole, they could only, agreeably to
 “ the declared Design of their Institution,
 “ represent them in Civil Affairs.”

The *sameness* of the Application with the
 former has before been objected ; the *dis-*
ference between them is now urged as an
 equal Objection. So that whether it be the
 same, or whether it be different, be it of
 what kind or nature soever, while the en-
 largement of the Toleration, is the grand
 Object of it ; in all cases, and under all
 forms, it must be strenuously opposed. But
 how does this difference, shew the expedi-
 ency of a second Consultation with our
 Brethren in the Country, previously to the
 renewal of an Application ? Is it credible,
 that those who had expressed their approba-
 tion of the grand Object of the Bill, and
 their

their wishes, in the strongest terms, that the Committee might pursue every step, which could in the least further its success; is it credible, I say, that such could disapprove the renewal of the Application, merely on account of such a difference, as no ways affected the main Object; — a difference which, as was apprehended, would effectually obviate the scruples of some persons, about joining in the Application? Those who so heartily wished to see an entire unanimity in our Proceedings, could not but cheerfully acquiesce in any variation, in the construction of the Bill, so favourable to their wish. But this difference, urged as an objection by our protesting Brethren, strikes me in a very painful light. For, if I may be allowed to reason from Men's own publick repeated declarations, this very difference ought, at least, to have reconciled some of the number, and united them in the Application. Some, accounting it an inestimable privilege, that the Clerk of the Bench, at the Quarter-Sessions, should see them set their hands to the Articles, only wished to have the liberty of subscribing left to them; and upon
that

that condition, professed to have no objection to others being excused (*b*). Such persons were therefore accommodated by the alternative proposed. Others objected only to the Testimonial ; apprehending it might

(*b*) “ One way, however, and but one, as I think, remains to heal the animosities kindled, and to put the matter in the most likely way for Success; which, if adopted, would, I am persuaded, reconcile every mind to it.”

“ Let the present mode of qualification, as required by the Act of Toleration, remain in full force, for the benefit of those who choose to distinguish themselves by their regard to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England*.”

“ This cannot be the least degree of hardship upon the Rational Dissenters, and may tend to prevent the disagreeable and undecoming altercations which otherwise may arise. This being done, let there be a petition to Legislature, that a clause may be added to the Toleration Act, answerable to the tenour of the prayer made for relief. This will be doing justice to every party.” *Candid Thoughts on the late Application*, P. 24. by an ORTHODOX DISSENTER, aliàs, a PROTESTING BROTHER. Now one difference between the first, and second Application, objected to in the fourth Reason, is, that such as choose to subscribe the Articles are left at liberty to qualify according to the present Act of Toleration ; and the Declaration is substituted, for the relief of those only, who cannot conscientiously subscribe them.

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be injurious to the religious Liberty of some Denominations of Christians. And one Gentleman in particular, with the most amiable appearance of Benevolence and Candour, (such as drew upon him the highest encomiums, from the Friends of the Application,) declared, that, " This was his " Difficulty. Here he was pinched. If " this could be got over, he should heartily " rejoice." * By these expressions we were led to expect his hearty concurrence in the second Application. The original objection did indeed appear to us groundless; since the Testimonial, as it then stood, could not possibly have injured any Protestant Dissenting Minister, of a good Moral and Christian Character; and it does not appear to be an obligation of Christian Charity, to sacrifice a regard to Self-preservation, in order to secure a retreat for Immorality, or Hypocrisy. I am sure it does not appear so to me; though I would willingly be second to no man, in the most extensive exercise of that amiable and ornamental Virtue. Yet notwithstanding such were our apprehensions, that Testimonial was so altered, as to re-

* Reverend Mr. BREWER.

move all possibility of suspicion, that it could ever operate thus contrary to the intention and wishes of us all. Yet still the opposition is maintained, and this very alteration, now converted into an objection to the second Application. Thus have the grounds of the opposition been so often shifted, that no Basis seems now to be left for it, but on supposition, that the liberty we desire of preaching the Gospel, without being subject to Fines and Imprisonment for Non-Subscription to human Creeds, is irrational in its nature, and would be too extensive in its operation.

“ It had been easy to have obtained the
 “ Names of many Thousands amongst the
 “ Dissenting Laity throughout the King-
 “ dom in Favour of this Bill, the Dissent-
 “ ing Congregations in general, are united
 “ with their Ministers in this Object, many
 “ of the most eminent amongst their Laity
 “ would willingly have joined in it. But it
 “ was judged to be a more respectful way
 “ of proceeding, humbly to submit our
 “ Cause to the Wisdom and Equity of the
 “ Legislature, rather than to urge it by any
 “ Numbers,

“ Numbers, beside those who are most immediately and personally concerned.”

And it should be remembered, that the nature of the Application is such, that no possible injury can arise to the Dissenting Laity from its success; though some considerable advantages may accrue from it, both to them, and their posterity.

“ The Deputies however were consulted.” They were so; but in the distinct capacity of Agents and Representatives in all Civil Affairs, of the several Congregations from which they were deputed. In this character they are known; and the Civil Privileges to which we are intitled, being inseparably connected with the legal security of our religious Liberties, and consequently in part the object of the Application, there was a peculiar propriety in their concurrence.

I am now led to take a *political* view of the Application, as stated in your fifth Reason.

V. " Because in our View, an Application, especially " a renewed " Application to Parliament, supposes a Distrust of Government : Whereas, We cheerfully take this Opportunity of declaring, that, as our Predecessors, our Brethren, and ourselves, have, ever since the never-to-be-forgotten Revolution, effected, under Providence, by that illustrious Hero, the Great King *William* ; and since, the no less providential, happy Accession of the *Brunswick* Line, to the Throne of the *British* Empire, enjoyed that most valuable Blessing, Religious Liberty, to a Degree *unknown* before those Periods ; We have not the least Reason to Fear, that so sacred a Privilege will be interrupted."

Here I must own, it is extremely difficult to suppress those emotions, which naturally arise from such a groundless impeachment of the Loyalty of the Friends of the Application. Though I never wish to see any other sword wielded in the cause of Christianity, than that of the Spirit, which is the Word of God ; yet if any of those Emergencies should arise, (may a gra-

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cious Providence prevent them!) which have heretofore endangered the Protestant Succession, and roused men of all ranks and professions into arms; I trust I should not be wanting either in Loyalty, or in Courage, to draw a Sword in defence of my Sovereign, and in the cause of my Country. And I firmly believe the same of all my Brethren. The Dissenters have ever stood forth with an unshaken firmness, in defence of the settlement of the Crown of these Kingdoms, in the House of *Hanover* *. They have been always Friends to Liberty and to Law. It is indeed a painful consideration, that the conditions of the Toleration Act, should in any degree limit our obedience to Law. In all cases, where the claims of the Civil Magistrate are kept distinct, from those which are the Prerogative of Him, who is the only Lord of Conscience, we are inflexibly, unreservedly, and most chearfully obedient to Law. Where those claims interfere, our Consciences

* See the Facts in proof of this assertion, very fairly and fully stated, in Doctor WILLIAMS's serious and earnest Address to those who opposed the late Application.

directed by the principles of our Religion, constrain us to obey God rather than Men. But even under these circumstances, we make our Difficulties known, and pray the Legislature so to model the conditions of our Toleration, that our obedience to the Law, as well as our Loyalty, may be compleat and entire.

So far was a distrust of Government from having the least influence on our conduct, that we were particularly encouraged to the Attempt, from an apprehension, that Administration were disposed to favour our cause. This was laid as the very ground of all our hopes. Indeed it would have been little less than madness, to have made such an Application to a cruel and tyrannical Government. It was surely paying the highest Compliment to the Clemency, as well as Equity of the whole Legislative Body, to indulge the pleasing hope that they would enlarge the Toleration, and render it more compleat, than the temper of the Times in any preceding Period would admit.

Let us however examine the force of your reasoning, in reference to some other and similar cases. Can you really imagine, that when our Fore-fathers applied for the Toleration Act, it was because they distrusted the Mercy and Moderation of our Great Deliverer, King *William*; that Heroick, and Inflexible Patron of the Civil and Religious rights of mankind? It was, on the contrary, the thorough conviction that under him, they might obtain a legal and perpetual security of their dearest rights, which prompted them so early to apply for an Act of Parliament in their favour. Yet surely they were equally liable to the imputation of distrust with ourselves. Allow me to put another question, which will come yet closer. What was the language of your own qualification under the Toleration Act? Did you mean to express any distrust of Government, by subscribing in order to exempt yourselves from the penalties against Non-conformity? Some of you qualified under the Reign of his late Majesty King *George* the Second. But could you distrust a Prince, who approved himself through a long and glorious Reign, the
 Father

Father of his Subjects, and the Guardian of all their rights? If you could, I might surely brand you, as having been disaffected Subjects to one of the best of Kings. Or could you call in question, the friendly disposition of the renowned names of *Cavendish* and *Pelham*? If you did not, we are no more liable to the charge of distrusting Government by our present Application, than you were by taking refuge under the Toleration Act in those days. And as for those who have qualified since the accession of our present most gracious Sovereign, to the Throne of these Kingdoms, they are exactly in the same predicament with us. To make your argument apply to the Friends of the Application, you ought not to have qualified at all; but as detesting the jealous spirit of the Constitution, and of your Countrymen, (who love to have Law as the basis of their Liberty,) have rather continued in a state of legal subjection to the severest penalties, to testify your generous confidence in the spirit of Government, and your entire resignation of your dearest rights, to the discretion and pleasure of those in Authority.

Nor can there be any possible weight in the inference you have drawn from this Application, unless the power of prosecution upon the penal Laws, was vested solely in the Crown. Whereas every Informer, tempted by the bait held out to his poverty, his avarice, or his malice, has it in his power to put these Laws in execution. And what relief then does the mercy of the Prince, or the Spirit of Government afford? As these Laws now stand, it can neither stop the Prosecution, nor remit the Penalty. Nothing more could be expected in such a case, than that Humanity would shed a Tear over its own impotence.

Surely then, under these circumstances, our Application cannot be justly chargeable with a distrust of Government. Such Distrust, and a desire of legal security, are by no means synonymous terms. And though Government, under the present happy establishment in the House of *Hanover*, has never countenanced persecution; we have notwithstanding held our Liberties only by connivance; which can never be considered

as equivalent to a full enjoyment of them, or to that legal security to which every good Subject is entitled (i). Such a state, in the words of an eloquent Senator *, “is only the relaxation of Slavery, not a definition of Liberty.”

Those who are experimentally unacquainted with a state of connivance, are incompetent judges of the influence it has on the mind. In your own case perhaps, or that of your Friends, the lenity of the Government, and the spirit of the Times, would no longer be considered as arguments for your entire satisfaction and contentment. They would, I believe, lose much of their force, and possibly vanish in your apprehension, into no security at all. However, as strangers to such a state of connivance, you are certainly not the best qualified to pronounce a Panegyric upon it.

(i) See the difference between Connivance and Toleration, more particularly considered, in the seventh Section of Dr. FURNEAUX's Essay on Toleration.

* EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

But after all, is it impossible, that a Party should ever arise of avowed Enemies to Liberty of Conscience? Is the Opposition that is now made to full security for such Liberty, even by a few among ourselves, and by more of a different persuasion, a presumption that it is not possible?

On the whole, whatever is fit and reasonable in its own nature, should be legal too. In a well-regulated State, nothing should be left punishable, which cannot be punished without the most notorious violation of justice, equity, and humanity. What we hope to obtain, is, to have our Liberty stand upon the firm basis of Law. The language of the Application, is, "Let us either suffer by Law, or be secure by Law;" or in other words, "If we are bad Subjects, punish us; if good ones, protect us." It is the glory of a State to exercise no Connivance. (*k*) Connivance
always

(*k*) Agreeably to what I have above advanced, a very learned and ingenious Writer thus expresses himself,

"SOLON is recorded to have said, that he had accomplished his system of Laws, by coupling justice
together

always argues either want of power in the Legislature, or something materially defective in the Laws themselves, which renders their execution unjust and impolitic.

No Friend to his King and Country would ever wish to see a dispensing power exercised in our favour; — a power diametrically opposite to the first principles of our most excellent Constitution — a power which, when exercised, was, and always will be productive of the most dreadful evils in these Kingdoms. And yet in case of Prosecution upon these penal Statutes, they must either be dispensed with, or that mercy resident in the breast of the Prince

“ together with strength; by which he meant to imply, that the legislative power would be of little
 “ avail without the associated and effectual exertion of
 “ the executive: This Idea may be extended; and
 “ one may assert without the imputation either of
 “ cruelty or presumption, *that the strict execution of every*
 “ *unrepealed law is the part both of wisdom and of mercy.*”

See Principles of Penal Law, Chap. xxvii. by W. EDEN Esquire, Under Secretary of State in the Northern Department.

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towards all his Subjects, will be stifled in its exercise. (1)

So that in perfect consistency with even a repeated Application to the Legislature, “ we can most heartily join in the loyal declaration of our protesting Brethren, with this addition only, that whereas they are

“(2) It has indeed been asserted, (among other Reasons against the Application,) in a paper printed by an Association of Persons at the New-York Coffee House, that, “ It reflects Dishonour on his Majesty, and the “ present mild and happy Administration, under which, “ every Protestant Dissenter is *protected* from all Prosecution on a religious Account.” But this assertion is grounded upon an entire Ignorance of the state of the penal Laws. A Protestant Dissenting Minister who has not qualified under the Toleration Act, neither is, nor can be protected by the Crown, in case of a Prosecution commenced against him. In some cases it is expressly provided, that no such Protection shall be allowed; in others the Conviction is perfectly summary; and the Informers having a legal property in the pecuniary Penalty, it cannot be remitted.

I should not have taken any notice of those Reasons, (which sufficiently confute themselves,) if it had not been to rectify so capital a mistake of an important Fact. Though their great coincidence in various respects, with those I have taken under consideration, seems to render an *occasional glance* at them almost unavoidable.

“ per-

“ persuaded, the *Brunswick* Line will never
 “ *interrupt* religious Liberty ; we persuade
 “ ourselves they will do more, they will
 “ *establish* it.”

Your sixth Objection is,

VI. “ Because we conceive a “renewed”
 “ Application to Parliament, when the first
 “ was attended to by so small a Part of the
 “ House of Commons, and rejected by so
 “ distinguished a Majority in the House of
 “ Lords, may be considered as indecent
 “ and disrespectful, and is not likely to
 “ meet with Success, especially after the
 “ Liberties taken in some late Publications,
 “ at which we cannot but express our
 “ hearty Concern.”

It is not, I believe, commonly admitted,
 that one denial of a Request, if that Re-
 quest be just and reasonable in its own na-
 ture, is a sufficient reason why it should
 not be repeated. As an indisposition to grant
 it may arise from very different causes, so it
 is often found, that a renewed solicitation,
 by bringing the Object under more mature

consideration, happily prevails over all former objections. And indeed he who can too easily acquiesce in a denial, in what he thinks a plain case; if he does not render his sincerity questionable, at least lays himself open to the suspicion, that he was not very much in earnest in his Request. A renewed Application was in our case a tribute of Honour and Gratitude, due to the Advocates for our cause. It was an additional recommendation of the merits of the question, that it had the sanction of many who are not more distinguished for their Rank, or the places they fill, than for their great Abilities, as Senators, or Statesmen.

However small a part of the House of Commons interested themselves in the former Application, compared with the number of those who have a seat in that House; the Majority of the Members present, was greatly in our favour. And the more reasonable and accurate way of judging, of the comparative interest we had in that House, is, to state the proportion which the Friends of the Bill bore, to those who
were

were against it. For our Opponents have surely, no greater claim to those who were Neutral than ourselves. If the absent Members had had any material objections to the Bill, it cannot be supposed they would have deserted their Seats upon this occasion; especially when there is great reason to apprehend, the Gentlemen in opposition to the Bill, exerted their utmost influence to collect all the strength they could. And how few could be persuaded to oppose the Application, I trust the faithful pen of History, will declare. It should likewise be observed, that so far were our Friends from contenting themselves with giving silent votes, that animated by their persuasion of the goodness of the cause in which they were engaged, they entered with spirit into the merits of the question; and the doctrine of Toleration was stated with such perspicuity, and pleaded by them, with such an energy and force of argument, and such persuasive powers of eloquence, as loudly proclaimed both the reasonableness of the Application, and the great abilities of its Patrons.

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If it was, as you say, rejected by so distinguished a Majority in the House of Lords; you will give me leave to say also, that it was patronized by an equally distinguished Minority. We cannot forbear with pleasure to reflect, upon the signal exertion of the greatest Talents in it's favour, by some of the most respectable Members of that House. The mention of their names, will testify to Posterity, that it was not an ignominious defeat. If the triumph of numbers was on one side, there is reason to believe, the triumph of Argument and Eloquence was on the other.

And when it is considered, that the Question was of such a nature, that many might chuse to follow the opinion of those, who from their Character and Profession might be supposed better to understand, and from their Situation to be more immediately interested in an Application relative to religious Liberty; we may easily account for a Majority against the Bill. We should likewise remember, the Peers of the Realm move in so exalted a Sphere, that they can know but little themselves, of Men who
are

are far below the distinctions of worldly Grandeur; and might therefore, through the medium of representation, have conceived very different notions of our Profession and Principles, from what they really deserve.

It might therefore fairly be presumed, that when our cause had been so ably pleaded, they might upon reflection see reason to alter their opinions; and in case of a renewed Application, declare in our favour; upon the fullest conviction, that all apprehensions of danger, either to Church or State, from complying with our request, were totally groundless.

As for the Liberties which (you suppose) have been taken, by any of the Friends of the Application, in their Writings upon this Subject; they amount to nothing more, than expressions either of laudable zeal for Religious Liberty, or of just indignation against all undue influence, to the prejudice of it; which surely can never be severely censured by those who are not themselves cool in their regards to its interests.

However

However the language of Individuals, supposing it to be in any respect censurable, is not to be imputed to all the Friends of the Application.

And after all, the certainty of success at present, is not, I conceive, absolutely requisite to justify a repeated Application. Do the wisest of men act upon this principle in the common pursuits of life? Whenever the time shall come, (and I trust it will come sooner or later) that an equal and impartial Toleration shall take place in these Kingdoms, the present Application, I am persuaded, will not only be remembered, but the *influence* of it powerfully felt in forwarding the success of such a design. It will be remembered too, that it was not owing to the *impropriety* of any former Application, but to other, to very different causes, that it then failed of success.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of the last Reason assigned for the Opposition.

VII. "Because we suspect a "renewed"
"Application to Parliament will become

“ the Oceaſion of Diſſention and Animofity
 “ among Brethren, amidſt whom We wiſh
 “ the Continuance of the moſt cordial
 “ Harmony ; and of weakening, if not diſ-
 “ ſolving, that pleaſing Union, which has,
 “ now, for many Years, happily ſubſiſted,
 “ between the Eſtabliſhed Church, and
 “ thoſe who think themſelves bound in
 “ Duty to diſſent from it. While our
 “ Conſciences oblige us to continue the
 “ Separation, it is our moſt ſincere Deſire,
 “ and ſhall be our unwearied Endeavour,
 “ that ſuch Separation may be of no greater
 “ Extent than is abſolutely neceſſary ; and,
 “ that it may be maintained with a Spirit
 “ of genuine Charity towards thoſe from
 “ whom, a Regard for what We appre-
 “ hend to be the Will of CHRIST, con-
 “ ſtrains us to ſeparate.”

The printing and diſperſing of theſe Rea-
 ſons againſt the Application, do indeed af-
 ford a melancholy proof, that ſome have
 taken occaſion from the Application, to
 ſow with great induſtry the ſeeds of diſcord
 and animofity among Brethren. This does
 not, in my opinion, correſpond with a

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wish for the continuance of the most cordial harmony among us. For surely there is no great appearance of brotherly love, in attempting to frustrate the design of your Brethren, to obtain a legal security from Fines and Imprisonment for conscience sake. True Friendship would lead us all to seek, and rejoice in the prosperity of each other ; and generously exert itself for the removal of an impending evil from any of us.

One must surely call in question the sincerity of all former professions of Friendship, if it can be dissolved by your taking offence, at a regard to the security of our persons and property ; or can alone be maintained upon the condition, that we shall be contented to remain in a legal subjection to the penal Statutes. Such a view of the Bond of Union among Brethren, is a perfect contrast to all the definitions given of Friendship, or of Brotherly Love, by ancient and modern writers ; and is equally repugnant to the feelings of every heart, that is warmed with that generous principle. So far would a Man be from wishing to see the

the sword hang over the head of his Friend,
that he would rather say upon discovering
the uplifted arm

Me Me ——— in me convertite ferrum.

VIRG. *Æneid.* Lib. ix. v. 427.

Or if destitute of such generous ardours,
yet where no danger could arise to himself,
the feeblest and most languid operation of
Friendship, would dictate a fervent inter-
cession for an endangered Friend, or at least
a cordial Amen to the prayer he presented
on his own behalf.

However notwithstanding the Applica-
tion has been, or may be thus *accidentally*
the occasion of discord and animosity; this
effect is most unjustly charged upon the
Application itself, as if it had any *natural*
tendency to produce such unhappy conse-
quences. For the ultimate design of it,
was to procure ease and security to those
who could not qualify under the Toleration
Act, without the most remote tendency to
injure the condition of others, who were
legally tolerated before. The principles
therefore upon which you reason, seem
to me precisely of the same nature, with

those which have been adopted and urged by the enemies of Revelation, against the holy and benevolent religion of Jesus. Our divine Master himself declared to his disciples, " that he came not to send peace " but a sword ; for I am come (said he) " to set a man at variance against his Father, and a Daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter in Law against her Mother in Law."* This declaration has been perverted, to represent the nature of Christianity as unfriendly to the peace of civil society ; and there would certainly be some propriety in the conclusion, according to the reasoning you have made use of on the present occasion. But the injustice of the charge appears, from considering, that our Lord did not therein describe the genuine tendency of his Religion, which was to establish peace on earth, and good will to men ; but spoke merely of those effects which would arise, from the opposition made to it by the passions and prejudices of the unbelieving World. While therefore the bitter and cruel persecutions which his

* Mat. x. 34, 35.

disciples endured, not only from the ruling powers, but from those who were most closely connected in the ties of nature and blood, verified his prophetic representation of its *accidental consequences*; his amiable example, his atoning death, together with his numerous precepts of universal love and charity, did at the same time equally testify the benevolent and pacific *genius* of his Religion.

It appears to me to be paying no very high compliment to the Ministers or Members of the established Church, to suppose that this Application should any ways tend to weaken, if not dissolve that pleasing union, which now subsists between them, and us. Shall we consider them as incapable of uniting in affection with Dissenters, unless they view them as in a state of connivance? Will the legal Toleration of their Dissenting Brethren, with whom many of them have heretofore candidly cultivated a friendly Intercourse, necessarily break asunder the bands of union? Did the present Toleration Act produce such effects? Surely not. Nor is any further se-

paration from the Church implied in this Application. The success of it would produce no alteration in our principles, but merely in our legal condition. For my own part, I should think it would mutually operate, to the strengthening and even increasing that degree of Friendship which now subsists between us. As far as our Brethren of the Establishment, are disposed to a friendly intercourse with us, their credit would surely be less endangered by maintaining it with persons legally tolerated, than with such as are merely connived at. For mere connivance seems to imply, that we are unworthy of the protection of the State; from whence it might be inferred, that we were unworthy too of the Friendship of good men. Indeed, I have too high an Idea of the humanity and benevolence of the Clergy in general, to imagine that our obtaining a legal security, could be considered by them as a disagreeable object, or prove the occasion of weakening, or dissolving the Friendship subsisting between us. It would be a strange abuse of language to call that man a Friend, who should regret, that every merciless Bigot in
the

the Kingdom, had it not in his power to drag down the vengeance of the penal Laws upon our heads, at his pleasure. Yet this must be the temper and language of him, who grows cool in his friendly regards to us, on account of our repeated Application, for an exemption by Law, from Fines and Imprisonment for conscience sake.

On the other hand, I am persuaded the less disposition we see in the members of the Establishment, to continue any hardships on those who separate from her communion, the more highly will such persons esteem, and the more cordially will they love them.

And is your insinuation just, that by thus applying for legal security, we carry our separation to a "greater extent, than is absolutely necessary?" You yourselves allow, that so far as conscience is concerned, the separation is absolutely necessary. But the consciences of our protesting Brethren, are to be the standard by which ours are to be measured; or else we carry the separation, it seems, to a greater extent than is neces-

sary. God forbid that either of these should be the case! If our consciences are more scrupulous than yours, about complying with the terms of the present Toleration Act; I hope the *rights* of our consciences, are still as sacred, as those of yours. Supposing, but not granting, that our Application implied our further separation from the Church of *England* — if the same language was addressed to you by the members of that Church, to restrain your separation from the Church of *Rome*, within the same limit with their's; which you have addressed to us, to restrain our separation from the Church of *England*, within the same limit with your's; what answer would you return to them, but that which I have now made to you?

Again, how is the maintenance of a
 “ spirit of genuine charity towards those,
 “ from whom a regard for what we ap-
 “ prehend to be the will of Christ con-
 “ strains us to separate,” interrupted on
 our part any more than on yours? Out of
 regard to that Will, you cannot *conform*.
 For the same reason we cannot *qualify*. It
 is

is the first time I have learnt, that it was essential to a spirit of genuine Charity, to submit to a claim from any Quarter, of lording it over the consciences of Christians. However I have the satisfaction to reflect, that our godly and learned Fore-fathers (whose memory it seems I more highly value than yourselves,) were guilty of many such breaches of Charity (if they must be so called,) in similar cases.

Upon the whole, it is “ my most sincere
 “ desire, and shall be my unwearied en-
 “ deavour, that my separation from the
 “ Church of *England*, be of no greater ex-
 “ tent than is absolutely necessary; and
 “ that it may be maintained with a spirit
 “ of genuine Charity towards those, from
 “ whom a regard for what I apprehend to
 “ be the will of Christ, constrains me to
 “ separate.” But then I am by a regard to
 the same Will of Christ, constrained to
 pray, that I may be released from an obli-
 gation to subscribe human explanatory Arti-
 cles of his Doctrine, as a condition of
 Christian Liberty.

Thus

Thus have I gone through the examination of the Reasons you have assigned against the Application ; (*m*) and fully considered that Protest, which if the opinion of a zealous Patron of the Opposition be justly founded, “ will do the Penners of it “ immortal honour.” Whether it be justly founded, the Reader may now judge.

There is another Observation I would make, which I think of some consequence. You opposed the Application in general, without any distinction of the different objects it had in view ; your declared objections, respect only the removal of the subscription required of Protestant Dissenting Ministers ; without any reference to that part of the Bill which related to the relief of TUTORs and SCHOOLMASTERS.

(*m*) I would wish it to be remembered, that this Apology is by no means designed, as a Vindication of the Application in any other views of it, than so far as the Reasons of the protesting Brethren led me to consider it. For a more general and extensive view of the Subject, I refer the Reader to Dr. Kippis’s excellent Vindication, which still appears to me to be an answerable Pamphlet.

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If you believe the latter to be an object of importance, though your silence on this article is very accountable; yet your general Opposition is equally unaccountable.

Several of the persons, whose names are subscribed to the Reasons I have been considering, are, it is well known, zealously attached to a national Establishment, though of a different nature from that of the Church of *England*. It is not unnatural to suppose, that such persons might be more influenced by a predilection for the principles of their education, in favour of Establishments in general; than even by an attention to those principles of religious Liberty, which must lie at the foundation of Dissent from any Establishment. I intend not the least reflection upon any who are concerned in this Remark, for their attachment to an Establishment; but only to point out what appears to be an impropriety in their present conduct, resulting in great measure perhaps from that attachment. I believe it is not a groundless presumption,

presumption, that some of them very lately had not themselves subscribed the Articles; though from a general idea of their conformity to the *Scotch* Confession, they approve them; and therefore, would find no difficulty in subscribing them. But surely their conduct in point of consistency and propriety would have suffered nothing upon this occasion, if their Subscription had taken place of their Opposition. It may not be improper to consider, that a compliance with the requisition of the Kirk of *Scotland*, protects them only under the wings of their own Establishment; but does not at all secure them from the penalties of the Law, in officiating as Ministers of Dissenting Congregations in *England*.

Let us now take a view of the Reasons in their connection with each other; and see to what they all amount. Shall I do them any injustice, if I represent them in the following language?

“ We entirely acquiesce in the present
“ state and condition of the Dissenters,

“ under the Act of Toleration. As to
 “ any proposed alterations, we neither
 “ want them for ourselves, nor wish them
 “ for others. As to those of our Brethren
 “ who scruple to qualify under that Act,
 “ and Tutors and Schoolmasters who are
 “ not in full conformity to the Church of
 “ *England*, let them remain unrelieved,
 “ unpitied, in subjection to the penalties
 “ incurred by their non-compliance with
 “ the requisition of Law. If they apply
 “ for relief, impelled thereto by a religious
 “ regard to the authority and honour of
 “ JESUS CHRIST, the great Head of the
 “ Church — by that reverence which they
 “ owe to the dictates of their consciences
 “ — by an affectionate concern for the
 “ good of mankind at large, and of the
 “ rising Generation in particular — and by
 “ the regard which Nature dictates to the
 “ preservation of their own persons and
 “ properties — however laudable their mo-
 “ tives are, we will oppose them, we will
 “ frustrate, if possible, their design. We
 “ will pursue them, without mercy and
 “ without distinction. We will invite
 “ every ignorant Zealot, every furious
 “ Bigot

“ Bigot to reproach them as Hereticks and
 “ Infidels. If they deny the charge, and
 “ appeal to their daily Conversation, to
 “ their Preaching, or to their Writings,
 “ we will give them no credit. We will
 “ hold them up to the view of the World
 “ as persons who deserve none. We will
 “ moreover brand them as disaffected, dis-
 “ loyal to their King and Country, as
 “ Disturbers of the State, if not Ene-
 “ mies to the common peace of Man-
 “ kind.”

But if this is the language of your Pro-
 test, let me ask, Is it the language of Chris-
 tianity? Is it the language of Humanity?
 If it be not the latter, it cannot be the for-
 mer. It is a maxim, in my Creed at least,
 that the principles of sound Divinity, can
 never be at variance with the obligations
 of Humanity. How consistent upon fur-
 ther reflection, you may apprehend your
 own conduct to be, with your being asser-
 tors of rational Liberty, I cannot take
 upon me to determine. Indeed I do
 not understand the import of that term;
 when contrasted with the object of our
 pursuit.

pursuit. But whatever be it's meaning,
 or however injurious your representation
 of our conduct or principles may be, I
 can bear the aspersions with perfect com-
 posure, while I have the Bible in my
 hands, and read the command of our
 Lord, to call no man Master on Earth —
 while I hear an Apostle exhorting, to stand
 fast in that Liberty (however *irrational* it
 may be deemed,) wherewith Christ has
 made us free. And tho' I should risk more
 than your censure; — tho' I should risk my
 reputation, property, or person, in support-
 ing the interest of religious Liberty; I trust,
 this would not move me, while I am per-
 suaded it is the cause of Christ, and the
 cause of God.

Upon the whole, I apprehend that your
 Opposition has acquired all its strength from
 a misrepresentation, or misapprehension of
 the true nature, and real objects of the Ap-
 plication. Solicitous of securing the most
 perfect harmony, we set out upon the
 common principle of Dissenters, as such.
 Whereas You have chosen to hold up a par-
 tial view of the Application, and to repre-
 sent

sent it as solely intended to express a disapprobation of certain Doctrines of the Articles, in order to alarm the fears, and obstruct the concurrence of such persons, as are zealous for those controverted Doctrines — a likely means, in my opinion, of producing that discord and animosity among us, which, if we may credit the language of your own Reasons, you are very desirous to prevent.

Had the Application really been made with the view which you have represented it to be, I could not in that particular view have joined in it. But when I consider the difference between believing Articles to be true, and acknowledging the Magistrate's right of imposing a subscription to them, as the condition of enjoying Liberty of Conscience. When I consider that Truth and Error are usually blended in all human productions — that imperfection is stamped upon them all. When I reflect, that men of every persuasion, may disapprove of some of those Articles, while they firmly believe others — that the belief of speculative points is no security to the State — that the
disbelief

disbelief of them is no reason for inflicting Fines and Imprisonment — and that temporal punishments are no means of enlightening the understanding, of convincing the mind of Error, or of reconciling it to Truth. When I consider, that the Bible is the only rule of Faith, and Practice — and that by the present state of the Toleration Act, many able Ministers of the New Testament, are reduced to a precarious dependence upon the good Sense, and Benevolence of all who know them, for the liberty of their persons, and the security of their property. When I reflect on these things, the Word of God, as well as my own conscience, all my powers of reflection, as well as sensations of humanity, constrain me to approve the Application, and zealously to unite my feeble efforts, with those of my Brethren, in seeking legal redress.

As for those who oppose it, the best of motives have indeed been assigned for this conduct. It is allowed, that a zeal for the truths of our holy Religion well becomes all its Professors, and more especially its Ministers. But is this opposition the

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proper

proper way of expressing our attachment to the Person of Christ, or the Doctrines of the Gospel? The Disciples of our blessed Lord, were doubtless actuated by a real zeal for the honour of their Master, when they asked his permission to call down fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*. He could not but approve their attachment to his Person and Cause; but at the same time, he as highly disapproved, the way in which they were desirous of expressing it — so contrary to the mild and merciful genius of his religion. “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of,” was his severe tho’ benevolent rebuke. A misguided zeal has often been attended with the worst consequences, and made the World even a Theatre of blood. It has been the specious colour, under which persecution has appeared among men of every Country, and of every religious persuasion. If we consult our own history, we shall find there were times, when even “*England*, the seat of national liberty, and benevolence, became the bloody scene of intolerance and persecution; the ministers of peace and christianity were the active dispensers of death

" death and desolation ; and the perpetra-
 " tors of the most malignant murders were
 " clad in the pure mantle of religion." But
 true Christian zeal ever guided by know-
 ledge, and tempered with benevolence,
 shudders at the very thought of the most
 remote resemblance, of such an infernal
 temper and conduct. The recollection of
 those destructive evils, of which a blind
 and misguided zeal has been the parent,
 should ever put us on our guard, against
 giving the least countenance to it. Chris-
 tian zeal should be directed to nobler ends
 and objects. We should testify our firm
 belief of the doctrines of the Gospel, and
 our cordial love to them, by an indefatigable
 industry in our holy calling — by labouring
 in season and out of season for the salvation
 of immortal Souls — by defending the truth
 by solid arguments — explaining the prin-
 ciples and precepts, and unfolding the pro-
 mises of the Gospel — by the most affec-
 tionate exhortations to lost and perishing
 sinners, not to neglect the great Salvation
 — by pouring the balm of consolation into
 the afflicted breast of the humble penitent
 — and by establishing true believers in

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knowledge,

knowledge, faith, and holy obedience. Thus will our zeal be subservient to the benevolent design of our holy Religion. But when your Zeal has led you to obstruct the endeavours of your Brethren, for obtaining legal security ; it surely has transgressed all just and reasonable bounds. You have not indeed yourselves smitten your fellow servants ; but you have expressed your desire, that the rod should remain in the hands of those, who have it in their power to use it at discretion. In vindication of this, the chief plea you alledge, is, your firm belief of the Doctrines of the Articles. But however clear your conviction may be, that the principles you hold, are in all respects agreeable to the Gospel ; there is yet a degree of charity due to those, who may be in some respects of a different opinion. It may be the felicity of some, to see no difficulties in the systems of Religion they adopt ; and therefore they are not only firmly attached to their own sentiments, but inclined to severe thoughts of those who differ from them ; from which the transition is easy to Bigotry and Intolerance itself. Such an approach to Infallibility however, is

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not

not the happiness of all upright, serious, and enquiring minds. Nor should the Apostolic exhortation "Let your moderation be known unto all Men" be forgotten; especially as it is enforced by a most weighty and awful consideration. "The Lord is at hand. The Lord is at hand to judge us; who will condemn us for nothing more severely than the want of moderation. The Lord is at hand who was himself a Lamb, and will not have any of his disciples to be Wolves, and to prey upon one another (n)." The same argument, in an inferior degree, may be alledged against all attempts to leave our Brethren at the mercy of those, who would make them the prey of their cruelty, bigotry, or avarice.

I have read with pleasure the many testimonies of approbation of our design, from

(n) Bp NEWTON in his 30th of January Sermon before the House of Lords, one of the best Sermons that was ever preached upon that occasion; and which breathed much more the spirit of the Text, than one lately published upon the same subject, and upon the same occasion.

Ministers of the Established Church — from persons very different in judgment from us, as well as one another. A TUCKER, a TOP-LADY, and a BALGUY (than whom no man surely can be more zealous for human authority in Religion,) have yet all agreed in the reasonableness, and justice of our Application. I fear the liberality of sentiment which they have expressed, may be considered by posterity, as a reproach upon our Opponents.

If this Opposition had proceeded only from those, who were from their infancy brought up in the principles of subjection to human authority in matters of Religion; it would have appeared less unnatural in itself, and I am sure, it would have been less painful on reflection. Such are incapable of estimating the privileges of those, who know what freedom means. And as for Men who reap the most considerable emoluments from human Establishments, it is no wonder, if they should discover some partiality to the claims of human authority in matters of Religion. But that Protestant Dissenters, the professed Friends of Liberty
of

of Conscience, should become advocates for human impositions of any kind, is matter both of astonishment and lamentation. We might surely from the relation of Brethren subsisting between us, have expected a different treatment. Every instance of unkindness from Brethren, appears doubly unkind to an ingenuous and benevolent mind, incapable itself of the same conduct towards others. To this circumstance may be applied, what is recorded in antient fable of an Eagle wounded by a feathered dart ; who lamented not so much that she was wounded, as that the instrument of destruction to her who was of the *feathered* race, should be *feathered* too.

Βλέπων ὃ οὐκ ὄν, εἶπεν ἐπιερωμύον,
Βαβαί, πῶτερόν με τόν πῶτερόν ὀλλύει.

There is certainly a propriety in the observation of the truly candid and modest Mr. WOLLASTON, that it is unchristian in any of our Brethren, “ to wish to continue
“ the use of a yoke that galls us, though
“ it may fit them; when a lighter and more
“ simple

“ simple and more conformable to the bur-
 “ then of Christ, would sit easy upon
 “ both *.”

Has this opposition been conducted with a truly Christian spirit? Have no representations been made of your Brethren engaged in this Application, which tend to destroy their reputation and comfort? Upon the credit of your representation, have not many persons concluded that those only who disapprove of some particular Doctrines, were engaged in it? It would, I think, have been more becoming the Christian temper, if at the same time that you professed to ground your opposition, upon your attachment to the Doctrinal Articles; you had as constantly and publickly asserted, that many who thought differently from you of the merits of the Application, were agreed with you in sentiment, upon those Doctrinal points.

That the Bible itself, that infallible record of truth and grace, has in common with the advocates for its sufficiency and

* Vide WOLLASTON's Address to the Clergy, p. 21.
 perfection

perfection, suffered no small indignity, is a very painful reflection. How has that sacred volume been traduced, as a vague, and uncertain guide; the source alike of truth and error, and therefore insufficient and dangerous to be trusted, without the authoritative decisions of fallible men! Tho' such an objection does honour to our cause, it is far from reflecting honour upon that, which needed such presumption to support it.

At Rome, it would be heard with pleasure, that human authority in the concerns of Religion, is grown into such credit in a reformed Country — that some even of those who have hitherto professed to be it's greatest Opponents, seem to be reconciled to it's claims — that even a learned Professor * of a famous University, not hitherto reckoned the most favourable to Dissenters, should appear at the bar of a *British* House of Commons, at the request of some who have called themselves Dissenters, to oppose the

* ROBERT CHAMBERS, LLB. *Vinerian* Professor of the Laws of *England* in the University of OXFORD.

grand principles of Protestantism, and Toleration.

Were it possible to suppose, the principles upon which this Opposition is founded, could become general; how would a Parent's heart be affected at the most distant apprehension, that Statutes now dormant, may be revived against their Children, should they be in the number of those who scruple complying with the conditions of Toleration, now established by Law.

It is true our Attempt has again failed of success, after having been most honourably supported, and less generally opposed (o). But whatever be the issue of any future attempt, if such an attempt be made —

(o) The Dissenters have not only the satisfaction to reflect, that some other of the Lay-Peers divided for the Commitment of the Bill, besides those who espoused their former Application; but likewise that the Bp of LINCOLN, was numbered among the illustrious Minority. His conduct upon this occasion, reflects peculiar honour upon his character, considering the general opposition of the Right Reverend BENCH; and cannot fail to endear his Name to us and our posterity, as a true Friend to the interests of Religious Liberty.

should

should the Penal Laws be continued — should they even be executed thro' the Bigotry or Malevolence of particular persons ; it will nevertheless become all who have been concerned in an Application for relief from those Laws, to persevere with fidelity in the sacred service in which they are engaged, animated by a warm desire to promote the glory of God, and the Kingdom of Christ in the World — by the frequent recollection of the solemn engagements they are under as Ministers of Christ — and by a zealous concern for the welfare of the souls committed to their charge. Under the influence of these motives, I pray God we may be enabled to fulfil our ministry — to discharge all the duties of social life — to cultivate all the graces of the Christian character, and all the virtues of humanity ; that so we may approve ourselves good Christians, and good subjects, testifying to all the world, that our subjection to penal laws, and our Non-compliance with them, is our infelicity, not our crime.

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R E V I E W

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 CHURCH of ENGLAND,**

**To which a SUBSCRIPTION is required of
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